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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4376
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES PRIORITY
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY 0844
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY MINSK PRIORITY 0365
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 1009
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 4898
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0774
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001666

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CVIS](#) [BO](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY/BELARUS: TURKEY KEEPING A LOW PROFILE ON
BELARUS

REF: A. STATE 46172

[1](#)B. STATE 46976

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons
1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) We shared ref b points concerning our talks with EU member states on responding to Belarus elections with MFA Commonwealth of Independent States Department Head Meltem Buyukkarakas on March 28. We asked if Turkey has considered making public statements concerning the fraudulent elections in Belarus and the subsequent mass arrests of opposition protesters. We also inquired about Turkey-Belarus relations and the nature of bilateral contacts.

[1](#)2. (C) Buyukkarakas told us that Turkey is not considering public statements critical of the Lukashenka regime at this time but continues to monitor the situation. She noted that Turkey had not responded to the Belarusian request for a congratulatory message following the election results and continues to align itself with most EU positions concerning Belarus. She said that Turkey does not formally abide by current EU travel restrictions on selected Belarusian individuals, but has had no recent political level contacts with Belarusian officials. She added that "technical level" visits may occur, but was not aware of any ongoing contacts. (Note. The last high-level official visit we are aware of was a trade delegation led by State Minister Tuzmen to Minsk in March, 2005. End Note.)

[1](#)3. (C) Buyukkarakas explained that Turkey supports democratization and human rights in Belarus but believes that little will be gained by isolating Minsk; Turkey will instead focus on "constructive criticism." She stated that Turkey agrees the election was fraudulent; Turkish OSCE observers fully concur with the OSCE's report. However, Turkey will seek to keep open lines of communication with Minsk, while avoiding high-level contacts.

[1](#)4. (C) We drew Buyukkarakas' attention to our discussions with EU members and other candidate states on travel restrictions on Lukashenka and other regime figures. We suggested the MFA review any planned technical contacts with Belarus to ensure they do not involve Belarusian security personnel or others who might be implicated in election fraud or human rights abuses. We also urged the MFA to consider a public statement expressing concern for the situation in Belarus and support for victims of human rights abuses there. Buyukkarakas promised to convey our suggestions to senior MFA officials.

15. (SBU) European diplomats here have told us they have received no instructions so far to approach Turkey on Belarus.

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